

Washington, DC – Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore) will offer a series of amendments during the House debate of the fiscal year 2005 Department of Defense (DoD) Appropriations bill, shifting funds from the controversial and questionable missile defense program to use for clearing landmines overseas and cleaning up sites with unexploded ordnance (UXO) in the U.S. around the world. One of Blumenauer's constituents, Travis Bradach-Nall, a 21-year-old Marine, was killed by a land mine in Iraq almost a year ago and Blumenauer has redoubled his efforts in the young man's memory.

"Congress has been missing in action on the issue of cleaning up dangerous and deadly landmines and unexploded ordnance, which can result in tragedies like Travis' death," said Blumenauer. "We need to make every effort to make sure similar tragedies are avoided in the future by providing the resources needed to eradicate these threats."

Bradach-Nall's mother Lynn Bradach, is a constituent of Blumenauer's and has dedicated herself to eradicating landmines around the world as an advocate for Adopt-A-Minefield (AAM). AAM is a United Nations Association-related charity that raises funds for land mine cleanup from battlefields around the world.

During debate on his amendments, Blumenauer will highlight the continued dangers from landmines to our troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Including Bradach-Nall, at least 19 U.S. soldiers in Iraq and six in Afghanistan have been killed by landmines since September 11, 2001. Landmines also caused approximately 30 percent of US casualties in the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Blumenauer also argued that UXO threatens civilians around the world, including here in the U.S. UXO includes bombs, missiles, and landmines that have been used for combat or training but did not explode or which have been buried for disposal. Blumenauer has been a longtime champion of the cleanup of UXO and military toxics, arguing that Congress and the Department of Defense have been too slow in responding to this enormous problem. In 2003, Blumenauer worked to include language in the DoD Authorization bill requiring the agency to release an inventory of UXO throughout around the U.S. The Defense Department (DoD) estimates that identifying, assessing, and cleaning up contamination from military munitions will cost between \$8 billion to \$35 billion. At the current spending rate of approximately \$106 million annually, it could take up to 300 years to protect the public. The House DOD Appropriations bill allocates just over \$100 million for this effort in fiscal year 2005.

"UXO and landmines threaten our troops and communities around the world today," Blumenauer said. "Missile defense purports to protect us from an imagined threat far in the

future. Our research priorities should reflect today's realities, not science fiction."